

RACE IN AMERICA: FROM THE CIVIL WAR TO 21ST CENTURY AMERICA

August 11, 2022, 6pm-8pm, in-person

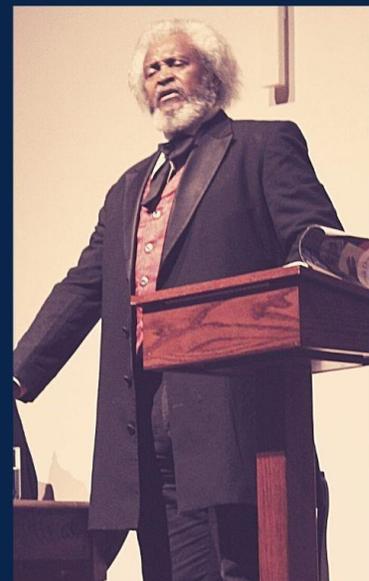
Spend an evening exploring the depths of American agitation, the challenge of race during the Civil War era, and the 21st century roots that continue to bind us to our past.



**MODERATED BY DR. MATTHEW WARSHAUER,
CCSU PROFESSOR OF HISTORY**



Featuring
Howard Wright
as Abraham Lincoln
and
Michael Crutcher as
Frederick Douglass



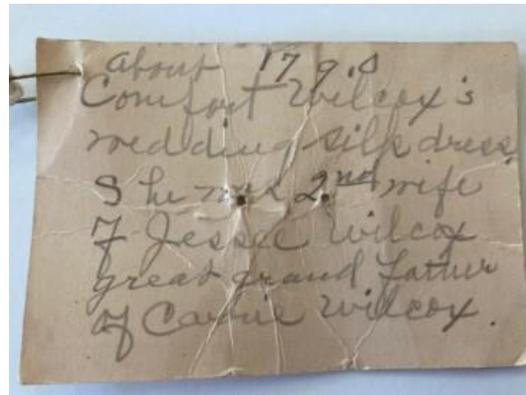
Free. Register at
www.avonctlibrary.info

Society is awarded a grant from Connecticut Humanities for summer events

The Society was awarded a grant in the amount of \$1,000 from Connecticut Humanities to support our participation in the CT Summer at the Museum initiative. This program encourages families to visit museums and historic sites in CT this summer, with free admission for children age 18 and under with one adult. (see page 6) While the Avon Historical Society does not charge admission to visit the 1865 Pine Grove Schoolhouse, we will use the funding for items needed for displays in the schoolhouse, pay for printed copies of the children's scavenger hunt and purchase a new U.S. flag and holder for the exterior of the building. In addition part of the funding will be used to defray the costs of the RACE IN AMERICA event being held in August. The event is open to the public and appropriate school age children are encouraged to attend and learn.

Society wins grant from the National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) to restore a 228-year old wedding dress!!

Close detail of the dress and provenance

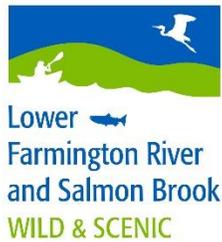


In Rev. Rufus Hawley's journal of February 5, 1794

Wednesday Fair, very windy & extream cold. The Associatn Spent the forenoon in religious conversatn, broke up p.m. I rode home. Married Jesse Willcox of Northington (Widoer) & the Widw Comfort Peck of Bristol.

The Avon Historical Society won an Historic Preservation Grant from the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution to preserve the oldest textile in its collection. Funding for this project was made possible through the sponsorship of Simsbury's Abigail Phelps Chapter, National DAR. The grant will be used for the repair, conservation and restoration of a dress worn by Comfort Peck for her wedding to Jesse Wilcox in Northington, the original name of Avon, on February 5, 1794. It was donated to the Society forty years ago by the family of Carrie Wilcox (1876-1972) who was the great granddaughter of Comfort and Jesse Wilcox. A written note explained the dress and an entry in the journal of Rev. Rufus Hawley on the date of the wedding confirmed the event. Comfort and Jesse had six children and are buried in the West Avon Cemetery. More information on the restoration process will be available in future newsletters. A video recording of the dress, before and after, is under consideration. The dress will be on permanent display in the new museum at Schoolhouse No. 3, 8 East Main Street, in 2024 with full details on its restoration and history. Funding for a museum mannequin and display case for the dress will be raised separately.

Midyear report on 2022 webinar series: *Unearthing History: The Discovery of a 12,500 Year Old Paleo-Indian Site Along the Farmington River in Avon, CT*



It is with great pleasure that we report that over 7,000 views have been made in person and online (YouTube) of the 2021 and 2022 webinar series exploring the time, 12,500 years ago, when the first humans arrived on the northeast coast of this continent. The Paleoindians set up a tool manufacturing site along the Farmington River in what is now Avon, CT. This astounding number of views tells us that there is tremendous interest in ancient history. We are very grateful to the Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic Committee, made possible by the National Park Service, for the grant to make this 2022 series possible. Since the discovery of the Brian D. Jones Paleoindian site in 2019 during the construction of the new bridge over the Farmington River at Old Farms Road and Route 10. The Avon Historical Society, Avon Free Public Library and Avon Senior Center are partners in this educational series. Featured guests for each webinar are experts in their field and have been presenting truly fascinating information that opens up a door to the past many of us never learned. To read more about the Brian D. Jones site or to view previous webinars in either the 2021 or 2022 series, visit: <https://avonhistoricalsociety.org/paleo-indian-site/>

Artifact Identification Day a huge success!!

As part of the *Unearthing History* series, the Institute of American Indian Studies, Washington, CT, held an artifact identification day on June 25th at the Avon Senior Center. Fifteen-minute time slots were requested through the Avon Library website and volunteers from the Avon Historical Society welcomed thirty residents of CT to the event. Paul Wegner, Assistant Director of the Institute and a registered professional archeologist, along with Nancy Najarian, Institute volunteer, spent three hours looking over the items brought in by residents of the Farmington Valley, North Stonington, Madison, Enfield, Stafford, and Columbia. Items were large and small, found in rivers, lakes, streams, valleys, gardens, yards, farms, paths, etc. Several stayed to listen to Paul's identification while others partook of Nancy's show and tell of many items from the Institute's own collection. The photos below tell the story best!



These photos show some of the items found by residents in the state. Included was an exhibit of artifacts from the permanent collection of the Institute of American Indian Studies in Washington, CT.



1865 Pine Grove Schoolhouse
3 Harris Rd. Open Sundays 2-4pm through Sept.



1823 Schoolhouse No. 3
8 East Main Street (Route 44) – under renovation

A TALE OF TWO SCHOOLHOUSES

The Avon Historical Society is pleased to provide an update on the two schoolhouses leased from the Town of Avon. Open now for the summer visitor season, the 1865 Pine Grove Schoolhouse was leased to the Society in 1975 and restored in time for the Bicentennial in 1976. It is set up as a classroom of 1900 with desks, books, and many items used by students at that time. It is free and open to the public. There are word puzzles and a scavenger hunt available for young and old highlighting artifacts inside and outside. Please visit any Sunday this summer between the hours of 2:00 – 4:00pm. A volunteer greeter will be on site to assist you. The Pine Grove Schoolhouse Little Free Library is next to the building; available 24/7 to the public.



The year 2024 marks the 200th anniversary of the first class to attend the 1823 Schoolhouse No. 3, leased to the Society in 1980. To commemorate that event, the building will be transformed into a state-of-the-art museum of Avon’s history opening in 2024. Previously referred to as The Living Museum, the new museum will open on the 50th anniversary of the Avon Historical Society and will feature expertly designed exhibits covering the almost 400-year history of inhabitants in this community, then and now. Thanks to private donations, grants and an allocation from the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds received by the Town, work on Schoolhouse No 3 can continue on the exterior. Most work done has been in the cellar including new walls, floor, kitchen, bathroom and upgrades to lighting and storage space. Now the exterior work can begin which will keep the footprint of the schoolhouse the same with new siding, windows, insulation, electrical and lighting. Included in the specs is a security system and fire protection. Thanks to a grant from CT Humanities, the Society hired a Fairfield, CT-based company, Sawdust and Strata, to provide a proposal for the curation, design, production and installation of the interior exhibits in the main room. Sawdust and Strata is an Historic Preservation Specialty firm with experience depicting history in small spaces. The ante room will be dedicated to the discovery of the Brian D. Jones Paleoindian site. This space will be curated by the Institute of American Indian Studies.

This tale of the two schoolhouses is the foundation of the mission of the Society: to preserve and promote the history of Avon. Join us by visiting and supporting our work to keep these two buildings open to the public.

NOTE: An update on the Derrin Farmhouse will be in the Fall newsletter. Watch for details on results of a structural engineering examination, to be done this summer, to provide options on the future of the Derrin House.

TABLESCAPES 2020 – Huge success!!!!



Congratulations to the REFRESH Team pictured above, a local design team operated by the Kerri-Lee Mayland Company who won First Place in the recently held TABLESCAPES 2022 event. By all accounts, TABLESCAPES came at just the right time. It was the beginning of Spring, ticket holders from the canceled 2020 event returned with great enthusiasm, designers had a terrific time creating extraordinary tables that were viewed by over 200 people over the course of the two days and proceeds from the event are earmarked toward the creation of the new museum in Schoolhouse No. 3. A tag sale of gently used table items was a surprise success. Start saving your table items now to donate to next year's sale! Sponsorships from 2020 were recognized for 2022. TABLESCAPES 2023 will be held Friday, March 17 and Saturday, March 18. As requested by many attendees, the tag sale will return. NEW next year will be a 4-7pm cash bar on Friday night for viewing the tables. Watch for details in upcoming newsletters or local media. Sponsorships will be available again and tickets will go on sale at the beginning of 2023.

Things to know!

- The Avon Historical Society's Bill Yandow Scholarship, through Avon's Dollars for Scholars, was presented to Madigan Dwyer, a recent graduate of Avon High School. Maddi will study History at Smith College this fall. We wish her all the best and hope she will let us know how she is doing there!
- The Trustees of the Society have agreed to a proposal by Avon resident, Ethan Guo, a rising senior at Loomis Chaffee School, to create a podcast on Avon's history – past and present! After presenting his plan, a committee of Trustees agreed to work with Ethan on this project. It has unlimited options that could include monthly interviews with Avon's residents, information on historic sites and families, historical events in context and modern history that brings to light the complex and diverse community this town has become over time. It is anticipated the podcasts will begin later in 2022. Watch this newsletter and local media for details.

- The History Corner of the Avon Library will have a unique exhibit this summer created by a local resident. "A Walk in the Woods" will be on display from July 1 through August 31. It is created by Avon resident, Roger Howard, who has been making walking sticks for five years, many with wood found locally. These canes were inspired by some of his favorite books. He is a member of the Farmington River Wood Carvers, which meets at the Farmington Senior Center and welcomes newcomers. There are 11 walking sticks, historic photos of Avon residents with canes, "behind the scenes" items such as carving tools, paint, brushes used to make these sticks. The exhibit is open for viewing during regular library hours.



Some of the carved walking sticks on display in the History Room this summer!

- The Society thanks Heddy Panik, Board Trustee and volunteer in the History Room at the Avon Library, for her "pandemic project" transcribing the diaries of Frank Hadsell from 1859-1942. Of great interest to the history of Avon is his 29 pages about the Climax Fuse Company where he was a supervisor. This was an enormous undertaking transcribing 864 pages, more than 585,000 words, that fill four 3-inch ring binders. The whole transcript has been uploaded to the CT Digital Archive for the public to access: <https://ctdigitalarchive.org/islandora/object/150002%3A10646>
- The Society was successful in its request to the Avon Town Council and Avon Board of Finance for a portion of their \$5M in ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds to complete the upper interior and exterior of Schoolhouse No. 3. The amount of \$50,000 was allocated to the project. The Society will launch a paver fundraiser for the curation and creation of the new exhibits in the interior. An anonymous donation of \$15,000 has been received to jumpstart the exhibit portion of this new museum. Details on the paver fundraiser will be coming soon.
- The Town of Avon is once again submitting a grant application for \$15,000 from the state of Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act to be used for the HVAC upgrades at Schoolhouse No. 3. The Town and Society has been successful winning a grant from this program in the past for upgrades to its electrical wiring. We hope that we will be recognized for another donation as a valuable community asset.



CT Summer at the Museum runs July 1 – Sept. 5

www.CTSummerMuseums.com



THE AVON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



AVON HISTORICAL SOCIETY MISSION: to identify, collect, preserve, utilize, publish, display, and promote the history and heritage of Avon. (Approved by the AHS Trustees, Jan. 10, 2001)

ABOUT US: We work to deliver transparent, fair and inclusive processes and experiences, free from discrimination of any form. We seek to build a culture of inclusion within our members, volunteers, visitor experiences, organization events and our community. (Approved by the AHS Trustees, March 9, 2022)

2022-2023 Officers and Board of Trustees

Officers:

Terri Wilson, President
Dr. Helaine Bertsch, Vice President
open, Secretary
Eric Thronson, Treasurer

Trustees:

Carol Bradovchak
Mary Harrop
Ben Isaacson
Gene Macy
Brian Malone
Carolyn McGrattan
Cal Miller-Stevens
Heddy Panik
Sebastian Saraceno

MEMBERSHIP IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Contact the Society for details.

**All donations are tax deductible according to law and
are acknowledged in writing upon receipt.**

Proud member of www.farmingtonvalleyctheritage.org

**Do you shop Amazon? If you do, please go to: <http://smile.amazon.com> and CHOOSE the
Avon Historical Society, Avon, CT to have .5% of your purchase donated to us!
It is simple and free.**

PO Box 448, Avon, CT 06001-0448, 860.678.7621 • avonhistoricalsociety.org

